A MODERN MERCENARY.

WRITTEN FOR THE EVENING STAR BE E. AND H. HERON.

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Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

Maasau is a little dutchy in Europe which has thus far maintained its independence because of the jeniousles of the large countries. International affairs are now, however, at a critical stage, and the little state seems about to be swallowed up. Germany is represented at Revende, the capital, by one of her shrewdest statesmen, Baron von Elmur. England's influence is felt to be great, and the presence of Major Counseller means much. It was through Counseller that John Rallywood, a fellow countryman, had served seven years in the Maasau fronhis commission when Selpdorf, the chancellor and "man of the hour," sends for him and makes him a gentleman of the guard, During the visit to the palace Rallywood meets you Elmur and Valerie Scipdorf, the

CHAPTER III. The Gentlemen of the Guard.

Members of great families frequently re ard themselves as submerged individualities. They willfully sink all identity of their own in the traditions handed down to them, and live as mere representatives of a line which bears in common a noble name. This principle, which has something to recommend it, was adopted long ago into the system of the guard of Maasau, the offi-cers of which were first gentlemen of the guard and afterward men in the private and ordinary sense of the term. There were nine of them—a colonel-in-chief. whose position became honorary after his elevation to that rank; a colonel, upon whom devolved the active command; a second in command, whose title of overcaptain may be translated major; three captains and as many subalterns. And every individual was drawn from the noblest blood in the country. Thus it will be seen that Rallywood was

about to enter the best company in Revonde

On a lofty cliff above the gorge from which the Kofn issues to curve round the palace gardens, and exposed to the four winds of heaven, stands an imposing square block of gray buildings. These contain the perma-nent quarters of the guard. One whole side of the courtyard within is taken up

by the domed mess room, with its neces-sary adjuncts and offices.

Here on the day following Rallywood's interview with Selpdorf three men lounged over their lunch. Any one of them, had he cared to take the regimental rolls from their brass-bound coffee in the entercom their brass-bound coffee in the anteroom, could have read his own name repeating itself down the columns as generation after generation lived through its identical life in the same surroundings, and died, most of them going to the devil with a fine in-herited pride and even gracefully.

Nearly every man who had crossed the page of the Maasaun annals had dined in that historic room, and each one of the men who now held the right to dine there had a hereditary interest, and in many a hereditary characteristic, to main-There was old walrus-faced Wallenloup; the thin, dark, reckless Colendorp Adiron, whose great bulk behind a calvary sword was a sight for the gods, and so on the three lieutenants following closely in the footsteps of the three lieutenants who the footsteps of the three fleutenants who had been before them; men who went to the rendezvous of a duel in all comfort, affecting to be infinitely more afraid of catching cold than of being killed; men who kissed the wife and dispatched the husband with equal skill and as little noise as might be; men who were feared by a ough, swaggering, raucous soldiery, they only knew through the hard-faced sergeants; men, in fact, who lived out their debonair, picturesquely evil lives to the satisfaction of themselves and of few

On this occasion Col. Wallenloup, the commandant, was not present. Of him it was told that while still a lieutenant he had heen offered, as a reward for services rendered to the crown, the command of any Maasann regiment he might choose to se lect, and he had replied that he would rather be a lieutenant of the guard than a field marshal elsewhere. And so he re-mained to flavor the mess with his some-what blood-and-iron jokes. The messroom was a spacious hall, and though only thre men sat at table the place seemed full of life and color from the black polished flooring to the carved and vaulted from which hung in tattered folds the old banners of the regiment. Red hangings partially draped the dark walls, and over all from the stained dome the light fell in rich tones of color, while through the talk of the men ran the one weird sound that never ceased about those walls, the whimpering of the wind.

Suddenly the door opened, and a young man, small and thin, with a faint down pon his upper lin, entered quickly. "Unziar has won!" he cried.
"Won what?" asked Adiron, the senior man present, as he poured out another

"Won his second match against Aben-feldt with seven to spare." Adiron stretched his legs and leant back; his second match against Aben-

figure was well adapted for leaning

"My good Adolf, explain yourself."
"Hadn't you heard of it? Why, they arranged it last night at Countess Sagan's."
"Abenfeldt fancies himself as a shot, but

forgot he had to do with Unziar." aughed Cantain Adiron.
"Abenfeldt bet that he could shoot more

"Abenfeldt bet that he could shoot more swallows in half an hour before breakfast than any man in Revonde. That was in September, you know, and Unziar took him up—with service revolvers—and shot fitteen, winning easily. Abenfeldt can't get over it, and challenged him to a shooting match again last night. I say," Adolf broke off, and his face altered; he thrust out a little and his tace aftered, he thrust out a fittle foot and surveyed the spurred boot that covered it critically. "I've just ridden back from Brale. That new charger of mine bolted down the hill by the paling. I went to see Insermann; they had not been able to move him, you know."

"Well?" urged all three voices at once. "Insermann's dead He died lost night of

"Insermann's dead. He died last night at sermann's empty place, which he was never

to occupy again.

"Ah, I told him that scooping pass of his was a mistake," commented Adiron. "And the worst of it is that his death breaks the line of the Xanthal Insermanns. Poor old Insermann! he was the last of a good stock, and I, for one, don't like new blood. What have you to say about that pass now. Colendorn? If I am not mistaken, you defended it?"

"Insermann was by three inches too tall," replied the individual addressed. "For a short man one would be hard put to it to discover a more useful-Hullo!" The folding doors had been flung open

with a crash and a man of about fifty or thereabouts dressed in the gorgeous green and gold of the guard strode in tempestu-He was short and heavily built, with a weather-red face and a coarse, over-hanging mustache, which gave him rather the expression of an angry walrus. So-argry, indeed, was he that his words came volleying out inarticulately. In his hand he held a crumpled sheet of parchment. The men rose as he took his place at the

head of the table "Insermann's dead and Selndorf save-The colonel's choked ejaculations broke, his voice failed him, and he sent the paper fluttering from his hand across the silver and glass till little Adolf picked it up. In another moment Colonel Wallenloup was

"I am afraid I must have walked up the fill rather too quickly," he said apologetscally, after draining a great gobiet of beer.
"However, it is not to be denied that M.
Selpdorf begins to take too much upon himself. The entire administration of the state is in his hands, and yet he is not satisfied with that position! No, he aims even high-

er; he desires to nominate the officers of his highness guard!" Every man present had his own peculiar-The colonel's reputation would not stood so high as it actually did but have stood so high as it actually did but for his insensate temper. Perhaps the an-ecdote told of him, that when discussing the point of having been ruled out of ac-tion during certain army maneuvers he became so enraged that he pursued the um-pire in question with a wooden tent ham-

mer, had added more to his popularity than all his thirty odd years of service and his immense genius for fortification. Some of the continental armies are al ways marking time, and they do not prize the most the man who marks time best, but the man who can bring some humor or touch of romance into the dullness of routine, and they prefer the humor to be led up to by the winding road of eccentricity. It was never dull with the guard. They essessed officers who kept their world on

"Gentlemen," said Wallenloup at length, when his last remark had been received with approval, "I have the honor to inform you that M. Selpdorf has seen fit to appoint, vice Captain Insermann, deceased, Lieut, John Rallywood of the frontier cay-

A silence followed this announcement.
"Upon whose recommendation has M.
Selpdorf taken this step?" inquired Captain Colendorp gravely.

"Reasons of state -mere reasons of state,

He had the audacity to tell me so."
"I understood, sir, that you had other views?" said Adiron.
"Well, yes; we had virtually agreed upon
our choice, I may say, gentlemen."
"Certainly, sir; and you made that clear
to the chancellor?"

"I did so-perfectly clear. I told him in "I did so-perfectly clear. I told him in the most reasonable manner that we want-ed no condemned rabble in the Maasaun guard! I told him that we had practically decided on Abenfeldt in case of a vacancy

regiments of the German army. 'And I can assure your majesty that the feeling of admiration is entirely reciprocal,' says the C. O. 'We should be happy to incorporate your army in ours.' "Your old regiment?" "Your old regiment?" "Thanks, my lord," Counsellor turned father's," adding, "What's the matter with the dress?" "Nothing," said Rallywood, laughing. "Nothing," said Rallywood, laughing. "Perhaps I imagined on an occasion of this kind you might possibly stoop to something more misleading than this blatantly British get-up."

Before the laughter had subsided another Before the laughter had subsided another man entered the room. He was, perhaps, nearer thirty than twenty, and the face under his dull, colorless hair was singularly pale, but there was promise of great strength in the long, angular body.

"My congratulations, Unziar." Colendorp turned to the newcomer.

"Thanks. By the way, have you heard of Insermann? Gone out, they tell me."

"Yes. And have you heard of the new appointment?"

"No. But it's Abenfeldt, of course. The colonel as good as promised him last year."

colonel as good as promised him last year."
"Ever heard of Lieut. Rallywood of the frontier?" demanded Colendorp, in his slow

"Yes, I do happen to know him. Unziar looked round in some surprise. "He was the frontier fellow who undertook to be my second at the station when I fought De Balsas because he insisted that our trains were inferior to those in Germany. Rallywood—you don't mean to say?" a slow comprehension dawning upon him. "But it's impossible. The fellow's an Englishman. How could such a thing be pos-

On the frontier, yes, but not in the

Colendorp was a silent, reserved man, disliked by persons who met him casually in society, but to those who inhabited with him the quarters at the palace he stood as the impersonation of the grim spirit of the guard. He drew away from the table and guard. He drew crossed his legs. "The idea has at length occurred to one

man," he said, with a glance on Unzlar's pale face; "to M. Selpdorf, in fact." Unziar looked back at his interiocutor, his eyes hardening.
"Of course," he said, bringing out each word distinctly, "Railywood must be got

"It will offend M. Selpdorf if his nominee "It will offend M. Selpdorf it his nominee
be interfered with," went on Colendorp.
"I have already undertaken that little
matter," put in Adolf eagerly.
There was an undercurrent of meaning in

all this of which each man present was fully aware. Unziar was presumed to have very strong private reasons to propitiate rather than to offend the powerful minis-

get-up."
"What were you expecting—a troubadour?
I am satisfied to appear in my own character. Only a proporton of the people wear masks at this ball; it's an annual affair. masks at this ball; it's an annual affair. Besides, life with a purpose is too wearing; one must always be on the alert and have the purpose in view, like the actor in a sixpenny theater, who plays up to the gallery and keeps his eye open for the rotten egg of his enemy. The egg may not be thrown, but he must be ready to dodge it all the same. And—I have never excelled in dodging."

ing."
"Ah-just what the chancelor thinks. He says he has an immense admiration for you as the most honest diplomatist in Europe." "He put himself to the trouble of men-tioning that fact to you, did he? Then I

thoming that fact to you, did he? Then I shall take the precaution of insuring my life. Anything might happen to a man of whom he has so villainous an opinion."
Rallywood was arranging his gaiters.
"Why? You don't suppose Selpdorf is going to throw the egg? He spoke of you with absolute affection."
"My good John, he has already thrown it!
Now I must have myself to find out the

"My good John, he has already thrown it.

Now I must harass myself to find out the
reason," said Counsellor. "You have spoilt
my evening out. Before I had no purpose;
now you have thrust one upon me. You
should have kept your, news until tomor-

Rallywood was getting bimself into his velveteen coat with a good deal of unnecessary violence "I don't believe the chancellor is so dan-gerous," he said, carelessly. "He is a con-summate actor, but one knows it."

"Yes," assented the major, thoughtfully; "yet the moment to watch him is the mo-ment when he acts that he is acting. With us others' acting is troublesome; with him it is habitual and a pleasure. However, he has given you your company; the rank is substantial, as far as it goes, and at least the accompanying pay is not altogether visionary."

visionary."
"Yes, he's done all that." Rallywood was flinging some of his belongings back into his portmanteau.
"The next thing will be to find you a mission

"He has done that also." Rallywood



occurring. I even went so far as to remind him that there had been Abenfeldts among us for four centuries."

'He couldn't meet that argument!" ex-

claimed Adiron. "No, he parried it gracefully, I admit. He reminded me in turn that there had been Selpdorfs also in the guard, and swore that had he a son of his own to nominate he must still at this moment have given the preference to this Englishman. I left him to reconsider the matter, however, and rode home, to find that already waiting for me in my quarters," and he pointed to the

parchment in Adolf's hand.

Adolf looked up with a smile. "He will not join immediately, sir, this Rallywood?" he said, with his gentle lisp.

"Not for a week. "Then it doesn doesn't really matter, you know," added the young man. Wallenloup's red-shot eyes gleamed upon him suddenly.

"As your commanding officer, sir," he said, grimly, "I don't understand your meaning; but—" and an odd smile flickered about the savent lies. said. about the savage lips. "As a private gentleman, colonel," put in Colendorp.

"As a private individual I understand your meaning very well. But if I were here as your colonel, Lieut. Adolf, by heav-en, sir, not all the officers of the guard, past or present" she rose to his feet as h spoke, and, grasping the hilt of his sword, glared round upon them—"should dare to hint at insult to a comrade!" and he drove the blade home with a clatter into its scab-bard, and strode out of the room as he had

come, like a thunderstorm.

The men waited in silence until the eche The men waited in silence until the echo of his footsteps died away, and in the mind of each rose a vivid memory. It happened, from causes which might, in the case of the guard of Maasau, be called natural, that the three present lieutenants, namely. Unziar, Varanheim and Adolf, had joined on the same day and by way of support on the same day, and, by way of supporting the traditions of their immediate pre decessors, each instantly agreed to chal-lenge each of the others, the result of which would, in all probability, have been the speedy occurrence of three fresh va-cancies in the list of officers.

Wallenioup heard of this, and sent for the lieutenants, whom he considered too valu-able to be thus easily lost

lieutenants, whom he considered too valuable to be thus easily lost.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I am about to enforce an old order that expressly forbids quarrels amongst the members of our corps. If you want to fight, fight some one else. There are plenty of men who stand badly in need of being killed. Turn your attention to them. But if any trouble should arise between any two of you, come to me. There has been enough of this kind of scandal about us lately, and, therefore, for scandal about us lately, and, therefore, for the future we will do the thing quietly with a pack of cards, or, if you prefer it, with

dice. The man who loses can—go. There is the river, or, for choice, his own pistol. You understand me?" Varanheim looked at Unziar, and Unziar looked at Adolf, and they smiled.
"I think," said little Adolf, "we might others to brawl with. "The river is abominably cold," added

'And the same dish is served for us all." wallenioup laughed.

'I have laid the alternative before you

entlemen," he said; "the cards or This was the story that rese in the minds of the men round the mess table, and a minute later they joined in a simultaneous shout of laughter. Adiron's big face was flushed as he called for a special brand of champagne wherein to drink the colonel's

"He's magnificent—the old man!" he said when he could speak. "Let him alone, He's equal to any mortal occasion. He re-minds me of the day when his imperial majesty over the border complimented him on the appearance of the guard, saying he should feel proud to number vs among the

ter. But this happened to be a typical instance in which the interests of the corps overrode those of the individual. Moreover the custom of the guard required the individual most concerned to prove his loyalty at such times.

Colendorf continued to gaze at Unziar. "We are much obliged to you, Adolf." said courteously; "but in compliment to his comrades I feel sure that Unziar will hard-ly wish to allow any other to undertake his special matter.'

Adolf would have spoken again, but Unziar stopped him. "As a personal favor, Adolf, leave it to me." he said.

Adiron, who had thus far taken no part in the discussion, now struck in. "But remember, Unzlar, that you must act with caution. For obvious reasons there must be no apparent design. The dispute,

whatever it may turn upon, must appear to come about naturally. Above all, it must not take place here.' "Precautions from Adiron!" remarked Colendorp with a thin smile. "The affair becomes serious indeed!"

"We cannot afford to offend England while Elmur is at work in this country. She is at this moment our very good friend," Adiron observed apologetically. "There will be many public occasions—at the palace ball, for example."

"You may trust me to keep up appearances," said Unziar. "Then it is understood that I arrange the affair of Captain Rallywood at the palace ball if possible. The matter may safely be left in my hands." Once more the folding doors were thrown back, and between the crimson portieres appeared the face of Colonel Wallenloup, charged with a strange expression. He advanced a step or two into the room, ther

"Captain Rallywood, gentlemen," he said CHAPTER IV.

turned to introduce a man behind him.

Danger Signals. A week later Rallywood returned from the frontier to take up his appointment in the guard. Advised by a note from Wailenloup that his quarters were not yet in readiness for him at the palace, he drove direct to the Continental on his arrival in Revonde.

Here presently Counsellor dropped in upon him. Rallywood was in his dressing room transforming himself as rapidly as possible into the likeness of an English gamekeeper; for a magnificent festivity in the shape of a masked ball was about to take place at the palace. All the world had been invited, and as many of the world as could go were going, each with his or her own dream or purpose, as the case might be Maj. Counsellor sat and surveyed his friend, occasionally offering suggestions

"Are you aware that the guard of Maa never condescends to show itself in Re-vonde in any costume but its own blazing uniform? I see you have your edition of it lying on the chair over there. Why are you not conforming with its amiable pecu-liarities?"

Rallywood had his back to Counsellor at "So I have heard, but I do not join until omorrow," he replied in an expressionless "And your quarters in the palace? How

"And your quarters in the palace? How about them?"
"I shall also have the rooms tomorrow."
Then he wheeled around and his eyes lit on his companion. "Hullo! I didn't notice you before. Is that your notion of the gentle art of masquerade? What are you meant to be a—sort of Tommy Atkins?"
"I believed myself to be disguised as an officer and a gentleman," returned Counsellor, rising to give Rallywood the full effect of his sturdy figure, clad in the uncompromising soarlet so dear to his country's heart. "This is the uniform of the

raised an expressive face. "I am to reform the guard!" Counsellor burst into a great laugh, but

as suddenly grew grave.

"They will take it kindly! Their welcome to you is likely to be-interesting." "So I expected. But I went down to the mess last week and was introduced by old Walienloup. They were very civil."

"Ah! and since you left they have been very silent. They are overdoing it—too civil and too silent. Looks bad, you know."

"Oh, that's all right; Selpdorf told me not to be drawn into any shallow quarrels," Rallywood answered with a smile. But the major did not take up the smile. The two vertical lines above his fleshy nose

deepened.

"It strikes me, my boy, that you've got the devil by the tail this time," he said, gruffly, as his eyes raised for a moment on Rallywood; "but you know how to take care of yourself. Ready? We can drive to the palace together. I have a carriage watting." waiting."

The couple proceeded downstairs, bought cigarettes of the waiter and started. The wind was howling in its usual twanging cadences down the broad streets, increas-

cadences down the broad streets, increasing in force as they gained the open lighted embankment of the river, along which they passed for some distance before reaching the courtyard of the palace.

The great entrance hall was still full of arrivals, while up the wide central staircase trooped masks and dominos in a changing kaleidoscope of form and color. Eager heads thrust this way and that, picturesque figures grouping and greeting. turesque figures grouping and greeting, cavaliers of all periods, maidens of all nations, monks, barbarians, cardinals, queens and clowns—sometimes the wisest heads under the most foolish caps—while here

under the most foolish caps—while here and there a few favored paper folk made desultory notes and sketches.

The painted ceiling stretching overhead is one of the triumphs of renaissance art. The identity of the master hand who achieved that marvelous work has been a moot point in art circles for a couple of centuries or thereabouts, and quite a library on the subject exists. The Maasauns are very proud of their ceiling sauns are very proud of their ceiling, prouder still of the controversy which has raged and continues to rage around it.

M. Selpdorf, as representing his master, stood at the head of the staircase, and received the guests with a good deal more politeness and discrimination than the duke himself might have shown, for that personage was said to have an awkward habit of turning his back upon those whom he nappened to dislike.

Major Counsellor was greeted with effu

Major Counsellor was greeted with effusion; Rallywood with raised eyebrows and a slight reserve.

"I had hoped to welcome the new captain of the guard this evening." Selpdorf said in a low voice and with a significant glance at Rallywood's velveteens.

"I have not yet joined your excellency. Tomorrow I hope to have that honor," returned Rallywood, and passed on into the gallery beyond. This gallery, opening from the head of the staircase, ran around the great saloon, which served the purpose of great saloon, which served the purpose of a ball room, and many of the guests were amusing themselves by looking down over the silk-hung balustrade on the dancers be-

low.

In the gallery Counsellor paused to say a word here and there to several persons, who, like Rallywood and himself, were without masks, but he seemed to have curiously little facility in penetrating disguises. Presently a burly old man in the glittering green and gold of the guard disengaged himself from the curtains at the back of the gallery, and, nodding a supercilious acknowledgment of Rallywood's sacilious acknowledgment of Rallywood's sa-lute, brought his hand down with a rough heartiness on Counsellor's shoulder.

"Back again in Maasau, Maj. Counsellor.
I'm glad to see you!" he said, with the laugh in his small eyes marred by a wrinkle of suspicious cunning, an expression which seemed startling on what was at first sight.

Count Sagan, have not forgotten me," he said simply.

"We believed you had forgotten Maasau."

"Maasau will not allow herself to be forgotten!" laughed Counsellor. "She is a coquette, and demands consideration from all the world."

the world."

Sagan's face changed.

"Yes, a coquette, who trifles with many admirers, but who knows how to hold her own against them," he replied, significantly, "Who is that?" he added, staring after Rallywood. "I think I recognize him as an English lieuterant in the frontier cavalry."

cavalry."
"He is the same today," said Counsellor "What?" exclaimed Sagan. "Why today? Has he, then, come in for one of your colos-sal fortunes?"

"Who can say?" returned Counsellor. "A fortune or—a colossal misfortune. Ah, there is Mme. Aspard. Au revoir, count." Counsellor passed on, perfectly well aware of the heavy meaning attached to the willful ignoring of Rallywood's appointment to the guard by its colonel-in-chief. There was certainly danger ahead.

CHAPTER V. Good Luck and a Firefly.

Meanwhile Rallywood had come to an anchor beside one of the high embossed doors of gold and white which led from the gallery into various luxurious withdrawing rooms. As he leaned against the lintel a voice suddenly said in his ear, as it seemed "My dear lady, why have such scruples? They are the most detestable things in life, and the least profitable. They poison pleasure even when they do not altogether deprive us of it. And what does one gain by them? Absolutely nothing, not so much as the good opinion of our friends, who can never be brought to believe we possess. never be brought to believe we possess them," said a nan in a mocking tone. A distinctly uncomfortable sensation per

vaded Rallywood's mind for the second which preceded the reply. The voice was Baron von Elmur's, and there was a note of admiration in it that he had reason to be acquainted with.

A woman laughed, a light, provoking laugh. Rallywood, who was still held by the crush against the door, knew it well, but he breathed freely, for it was not the laugh he had feared to hear.
"Nevertheless, baron, I like scruples; they are always respectable, and, therefore, of use-sometimes," the lady answered, in a high, sweet tone.

"Your husband, my Lord Sagan, has not ound them indispensable in his career." "But he is not a woman!" with a sigh.

"A beautiful woman can dispense with everything except—her beauty! That makes

fools of us all! Besides-' The rest of the sentence was lost, as Rallywood managed at length to force his way through the crowd, which was thicken-

Then he came upon a group of men he knew, men from the frontier, from the marshes about Kofn ford and the crags of marshes about Kofn ford and the crags of Pulsco, men with tanned skins like his own, and the mark of the collar rim of their high military tunics round their throats. They were masked, and represented various original characters, and were enjoying themselves hugsly. More than all were they astonished at being recognized so readily by Rallywood. Rallywood drew his finger round his throat by way of explanation. There was a general laugh, and the men scattered, each to seek his own particular pleasure. Rallywood rehis own particular pleasure. Rallywood re-nained looking down on the dancers. There was in the back of his mind some desire to was in the back of his mind some desire to identify the lady whose glove was still in his possession. He fixed now on one tall domino, now on another, but without satisfaction. He was discontentedly coming to the point of knowing that he had made a fresh mistake, when he turned his head abruntly, with a varie sense of heing looked. fresh mistake, when he turned his head ab-ruptly, with a vague sense of being looked at, and saw a black domino standing for an instant alone at the further end of the gallery. Even under the muffling silken folds, he fancied he recognized the attitude of the girl he had met at the chancellor's. He at once heren to make his way. of the girl he had met at the chancellor's. He at once began to make his way through the crowd in her direction, but when next he looked she was gone. He descended to the salon, where he danced with more than one masked lady. His s'x feet of stature marked him out from the shorter Maasauns, and the tall, athletic figure of the gamekeeper, who moved with so much of unexpected ease and grace, excited some attention.

attention. After an interval, as he stood back against the wall to allow a couple who had been following him to pass, they drew up in front of him. obey you, mademoiselle," said the

His companion, who wore a black domino, turned to Rallywood. "You have been looking for me?" she said, as her late partner

moved away.

"But naturally, mademoiselle," replied Rallywood. "You know who I am?"
"Not in the least I cannot even make

a guess, though I have been waiting to know since this day last week."
"It would have been easy to ask the question-of any one," she said, with an odd intonation

"By no means. There are questions which cannot be asked—of any one, because the answer touches too closely." Rallywood pulled himself up, with a sudden sense of eing ridiculously in earnest And then they were dancing.
"Yet you are not a stranger in Revonde Mme. de Sagan could have answered your question-had you cared to ask it," the girl

"It did not strike me to ask her. I trusted to the fact that, belonging to the guard, I must some day have the good fortune to nd you again.

"You are patient!"
"No," replied Rallywood, "I am not pa tient. But I know that all things come to him who waits. I wait!"

"So I see-excellently!"
"Have I not waited long enough to hear your name first from your own lips?"
"Stop for a moment." Then, standing beside him, she continued, "Ask me tomor-

"If I am alive I will!" he laughed. He felt her hand move with a quick tremor on his arm.
"I knew it! Which of them has challenged you, Unziar?" The swift question, echoing his own thought, took him completely by superior pletely by surprise.

He passed his arm around her, for the altz was nearing its end.
"Shall we go on? No; no one has done me the honor of sending me a challenge "Let us have an end of this absurd mys-ery!" said the girl impatiently. "I am Val-rie Selpdorf, and you are—"

"John Rallywood of the guard of Many au," he interposed. "I had my commis-sion from you in the anteroom of the hotel du Chancelier. But for that I should have been more than half inclined to refuse it."
"I wish you had refused it. It may cost you—more than a man cares to pay. I thought my father held the power to give any commission he pleased, but one can never reckon with the guard. They mean to kill you, Captain Rallywood! I to warn you, but I think you know more, perhaps, than I can tell you, or than you will tell me. What is going to happen? I want to help you-you must let you."
Rallywood laughed, but perhaps his arm

waltz. "My dear mademoiselle, I assure you that your fears are quite groundless. I am proud to belong to the guard of Maasau, and they have so far shown no intention of rejecting me. As for the duels, if there happen to be one—are no affairs common in Maasau? And afterward fewer funerals take place than one would suppose likely! Besides M. Selpdorf's wishes cannot be lightly disregarded in Revonde."

drew her a little closer as they moved more slowly during the concluding bars of

"You will be drawn into a quarrel before the night is over." Mademoiselle Selpdorf stated her conviction very plainly, without noticing his disclaimers.

The music ceased. Rallywood spoke once

more. "To prove to you how little I anticipate anything of the sort, will you allow me to have the last dance on the pro "That is nothing! What can I do for you?" she exclaimed.

"Expect me! If you would promise to expect me, I don't yet know the man who could stop my coming to you.' The words were lightly spoken, but Valerie Selpdort, looking up into Rallywood's eyes, understood that he was likely to be able to make any words of his good. They were handsome eyes, rather long in shape, frank and steady, the tris of a dense grabordering on hazel, as became the sunburnt yellow of his hair and mustache, and at yellow of his hair and mustache, and at that moment they contained an expression which remained in Valerie's memory as the distinctive expression of his face. When-ever in the future she recalled Rallywood she thought of him as he looked then. "I will expect you," promised Valerie. They both knew that for the moment they

stood together at one of those cross roads where life and death meet, where, moreover a look and a word convey a mutual revelation of character such as years of ordinary intercourse often fall to supply. (To be continued.)

THE STAFF OF LIFE it long enough you will not need a diagram or a diagnosis to show you what is

Efforts to Secure Pure Bread for American Workingmen.

CORN STARCH AS AN ADULTERANT

No Amount of Skillful Fraud Can Defraud the Microscope.

SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION

Written for The Evening Star.

There are a good many people in this world interested in bread from the standpoint of food as well as the standpoint of health. Adulteration in food products is an offense, or, if you desire a stronger term, a crime, which is being fought by municipalities, by states and by nations with a fiercer determination than ever before to bring the battle to a finish.

Leaving out of consideration the occasional use of various kinds of finely powdered earths, etc., it is worth while considering the kind of adulteration now practiced in the manufacture of flour, from which the American laboring man gets his staff of life.

No doubt the men who adulterate their wheat flour with corn starch console their consciences with some such reassuring thought that the adulterant is not only not poisonous, but uninjurious in its elements, and yet they are guilty of the most despicable piece of robbery known since meanness began, and those who eat it to the extent that the laboring men of the United States eat bread simply enter upon a cer-tain, and not so very prolonged, period of starvation.

How Adulteration is Detected. But first, a word or two as to this adulteration and how the scientific men are dis-

covering it-how they are working to render such adulteration as this in the future a practical impossibility. The starch of the flour of every wheat

perry and every corn kernel differs always and essentially as they come under the microscope. Take a sample of honest flour, and you will find every tiny grain to the last hundredth that comes into your field of vision as you move the slide below the lens roundish in shape, every one of them, if cut in twain, showing a series of con-centric circles, and a transverse section in-dicating the general form of a pair of

When the corn starch, like the wheat starch, has been washed clear of all other elements, every grain, to the farthest milionth, instead of being round, is angular, full of corners, the flat body of the grain usually showing from five to six sharp angles. In the center of the grain the lines are not circular, as in the wheat, but straight, starting from a well-defined spot in the heart of the grain of starch and radiating out in perfectly straight lines. from three to five or six lines in each grain.

Each one of these grains is inclosed in a wall of cellulose. The character of the starch on the interior of each is precisely the same, whether of corn or wheat. In

is just the right proportion of starch fo the needs of the human system, mixed with other ingredients which go to give the system its strength.

the wheat flour, however, as nature has given it to man in the wheat kernel, there

Why Adulteration Pays. When the men who want to adulterate their flour find that wheat costs \$1 and corn twenty-five cents a bushel, it is a very natural thing, following the bent of a crooked mind, to mix the corn starch with the flour starch. The two are of precisely the same character as to appearance, etc. But the detective is there, too, and, aided by that chief of all detectives, Mother Na-ture, the scientific chemist takes the adul-terated flour, washes it in cold water so that every part of the gluten of the flour is cleared out, and then, placing a tiny por-tion of the flour, or, as it now stands, starch, in a little tube, he puts it in solu-tion, colors it with iodine a beautiful pur-ple, puts a drop between the thin pieces of glass for his slide, tucks it under the microscope, and there, swimming together, side by side, as purple as a sunset in the land of the midnight sun, are the two types of starch grains, hundreds of them, the one round the other angular the one having concentric rings on its interior, the other with lines as jagged as the greenish radiations from a fractured pane of glass.

It isn't a question of theory, but one of very cold, hard fact. The scientific chemist, especially the agricultural chemist, such a one as Professor Harry Snyder of the state experiment station of the College of Agriculture in the University of Minnesota Agriculture in the University of Minnesota, doesn't have to depend upon any theories. He takes a sample of perfectly pure wheat flour, tests it, finds the grains of starch of the one type. He takes a sample of pure corn starch flour; the grains are all of one type and wholly different. He takes a sample of flour adulterated with corn starch, and the two types appear. There is nothing

and the two types appear. There is nothing left to chance But the adulterator knows his business. He has invented machinery which so rolls and powders the corn starch that, in some cases, the cell walls are broken down and the corn starch blends into the wheat flour starch. This would seem to be a blending beyond the power of the detective. But it is not. Professor Snyder has been carrying on experiments which show that he will, in the future—and, in fact, has already reached some decidedly satisfactory results—be able to detect the fraud even here, for by an iodine test he can tell the difference between a flour composed of mixed corn and wheat starch grains even after the cell walls of the grains are broken down. By far the greater proportion of all the adultera tion, however, is quickly discernible by the other test.

Is Adulterated Flour Harmful?

A good many people have asked this ques tion, but the answers have been, in many cases, quite vague-just such indefinite answers as would be apt to suit the man who is adulterating. There are three main elements

wheat flour which make it the staff of life when it becomes bread—ash, for the formation of bone; starch, for the heat of the body; gluten, or, in another word, protein, for the production of muscle. The gluten for the production of muscle. The gluten is made up of two substances, gluten and gliadin. The gliadin binds the flour together and makes it dough, the gluten prevents the dough from becoming soft and sticky. The gluten as a whole is the life-giving part of the bread. Now, suppose the man who gets his corn for 25 cents a bushel puts 40 per cent more starch into his flour than he ought to, corn starch. The man who cats bread made from this adulterated flour is robbed of 40 per cent of the life-giving is robbed of 40 per cent of the life-giving powers of the bread, for the incoming starch drives out the gluten. Very many Americans use bread as the staple of their diet. Prof. Snyder has demonstrated, by experiments upon men in feeding them for days at a time certain lines of food, to arrive at what is a reasonable ration for a man at work, that a man must have, where he has but little meat and not many vegetables, at least two pounds of bread per

day.

This must be honest bread, made from containing not less This must be honest bread, made from the very best of flour, containing not less than 12 per cent of gluten. In case any per cent of this gluten is driven out, to that extent the man's dietary is impaired. Suppose you were living on largely a bread diet, as so many American laborers are, they and their families. If suddenly, and without any knowledge of the fact—for the adulterated flour cannot be told by its appearance from the pure—your bread became from 15 to 40 per cent, or even in some cases 50 per cent impoverished, how long before your strength and the strength of your family would show the effects? And whether you are a laboring man or not, a very large part of your food is made up from bread or other articles of diet in which flour is used, and to the extent that this flour is adulterated with this corn starch to that extent you are robbed. starch to that extent you are robbed.

A Practical Test. There is no theory here, it is plain fact;

any one who wants to test it can go from a diet of two pounds of rich, nutritious bread, made from honest flour, per diem, with the few vegetables and the infrequent diet on adulterated bread containing one-third as much strength-giving power, and test it to his own satisfaction. If you try

it long enough you will not need a diagram or a diagnosis to show you what is the matter with you.

Some months ago, when the price of wheat was in the dollar region, complaints about adulterated flour were made from various parts of the western and southwestern portions of the country. So persistent and frequent were these complaints that congressional action at last was invoked. Prof. Snyder, at the head of the department of chemistry in the University department of chemistry in the University of Minnesota, has been called upon to test many samples of these adulterated flours. Here are three analyses, one showing what a typical honest wheat flour is composed of, one showing what an adulterated flour is composed of and one showing what an adulterated flour of, one showing what an adulterated flour is composed or and one showing the constituent parts of rice flour. It need only be said in this connection that the sample of rice flour, largely the food of the Chinese laborer, is practically the same as to its food value as the sample of adulterated flour which is only one of many which Prof. Snyder has recently been testing.

The analyses are as follows:

Pure Flour Flour P.C. P.C. 11.9 12.4 Ash (mineral matter)... 4 Pretein (including gluten) 12.6 Starch and starch-like bodies. 74.3 74.2 Here is another sample showing an ex-

tent of adulteration more pronounced, a sample not unlike many others sent in to Prof. Snyder from various parts of the

In this latter instance it will be

In this latter instance it will be seen that he who should eat bread from this flour would get 4.23 per cent of gluten, or portein, or life-giving power, as you wish to call it, one-third as much food value and one-fifth more starch than nature intended he should have.

The adulteration of one of the most important elements in the food of the nation is not lightly to be ignored. nation is not lightly to be ignored; its det-

riment to the race, physical and in large measure mental, will be in direct proportion to its extent. You may produce a cadaverous Chinese laborer on this adul-terated bread, but it will never make an American of the type of which America is proud.

CHINESE FACTORY GIRLS, They Appear Happy in Spite of Long

Hours and Small Wages. From the Los Angeles Times. A lady who has resided several years in

China draws an attractive picture of the

girls in the Chinese silk factories. She says

they are the gayest and brightest of the native women workers. The factories are large, clean, carefully ventilated, and well regulated. The girls are charmingly dressed in blue, with little decorated slippers, and smooth hair, decked with flowers, and silver-gilt or enameled pins, and each has two mirrors, her hair brush and her tooth brush. How much these are prized is shown by the fact that their forfeiture is the punishment for misconduct. Some of the workers powder their faces, though many of the country women have cheeks of rosy pink. One factory, at Sing Chang, employs 900 native girls, with European foreman and a European general manager. The work begins at 5:30 a.m. There is a tenminute rest for a light breakfast, which is taken by the hands at their working places, the machinery being stopped meanwhile. At 11 o'clock the work is laid aside an hour for dinner, which is eaten in a large room. The girls make common stock of their pro-visions. Each girl has at her side, while visions. Each girl has at her side, while at work, a little teapot in a padded basket, and a tiny teacup. She drinks tea frequently, without milk or sugar, and in small quantities. The working day is a trife under nine hours. In one department where the eccoons are stripped of their outer covering, and dropped into separate baskets, according to their quality, the work is by the place and many wares. work is by the piece, and many women work only a few hours a day. Wages average about 12 cents a day. In the next deage about 12 cents a day. In the next de-partment the sorting is more precise, and here the wages average 11 cents a day throughout the year. The spinning room is a pretty sight with its row of blue-robed girls. In preparing the cocoons for the spinner, each cocoon is brushed until the end of the thread appears. Six cocoon threads go to make the final filament, and each spinner works with thirty-six cocoons in a pan before her. The childre p.m., while the women earn about 8 cents a day. In the finishing department there is the same attention to neatness of appearance as in the rest of the factory, the girls being scrupulously clean and tastefully dressed. Neatness is taken as an evidence of intelligence, and no slovenly girl dence of intelligence, and no slovenly gir could find a piace in the fliature. The last department of the factory is the packing room. Here the skeins are packed close, formed into square bundles, marked as to quality, and wrapped in white cotton for hipment to the mills of Europe to be made

An Atlantic Steamship's Larder.

'rom the Ladies' Home Journal.

One tidy little refrigerator about six feet wide and twice that depth is the butterman's stall in this market under the sea Little tubs of butter are arranged on shelves to the amount of 5,000 pounds, and in company with these are 20,000 eggs. Twentyfive hundred quarts of milk and cream are stored in a separate room, all having been sterllized. This market has a room especially for salt meats, and here are hams bacon and tongues to the amount of 4,000 pounds. There are some articles of food without which the epicure would be unhappy, and which must be alive when cooked. Chief among these are oysters, of which 16,000 are carried to meet the wants of the passengers. Clams are only provided to the number of 1,500. Lobsters are not abun-

dantly supplied; 700 pounds is all the store-room shelters.

This market in the bottom of the ship contains, besides the things mentioned, fruit, green vegetables and an enormous stock of groceries. The latter is only limited by space, for groceries are not perish-able goods and will keep from one voyage to another until used. Tea and coffee are pounds of tea a day and fifty pounds of coffee. Perishable supplies are taken on beard in proportion to the number of passengers booked, and anything of this kind which is left over when the ship reaches used in large amounts-about thirty-three which is left over when the ship rea port is eaten by the crew.

A Little Mistake.

From Tit-Bits. The squire's son had just been ordained, and on the following Sunday he was to take the morning service in his native vil-

He was a young man and very nervous However, he did his best, and returned to the vestry having accomplished the service to his own samsfaction.
"I think I got through the service without a mistake, John?" he remarked to the old clerk, who was helping him off with

old man, with enthusiasm. "I don't know as I ever heard it better done." After a pause he added, "But the old parson, he pause he added, "But the old parson, he never gives us the evening service in the



Doctor-"You really must keep your spirits